

By: Representative Compretta

To: Judiciary A

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE  
FOR  
HOUSE BILL NO. 1316

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 97-23-103, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,  
2 TO REVISE PENALTIES FOR HOME REPAIR FRAUD; AND FOR RELATED  
3 PURPOSES.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

5 **SECTION 1.** Section 97-23-103, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
6 amended as follows:

7 97-23-103. (1) As used in this section, unless the context  
8 clearly requires otherwise:

9 (a) "Home repair" means the fixing, replacing,  
10 altering, converting, modernizing, improving of or the making of  
11 an addition to any real property primarily designed or used as a  
12 residence.

13 (i) Home repair shall include the construction,  
14 installation, replacement or improvement of driveways, swimming  
15 pools, porches, kitchens, chimneys, chimney liners, garages,  
16 fences, fallout shelters, central air conditioning, central  
17 heating, boilers, furnaces, hot water heaters, electrical wiring,  
18 sewers, plumbing fixtures, storm doors, storm windows, awnings,  
19 carpets and other improvements to structures within the residence  
20 or upon the land adjacent thereto.

21 (ii) Home repair shall not include \* \* \* the sale  
22 of goods or materials by a merchant who does not directly or  
23 through a subsidiary perform any work or labor in connection with  
24 the installation or application of the goods or materials; the  
25 repair, installation, replacement or connection of any home  
26 appliance, including, but not limited to, disposals,  
27 refrigerators, ranges, garage door openers, television antennas,

28 washing machines, telephones or other home appliances when the  
29 person replacing, installing, repairing or connecting such home  
30 appliance is an employee or agent of the merchant that sold the  
31 home appliance; or landscaping.

32 (b) "Person" means any individual, partnership,  
33 corporation, business, trust or other legal entity.

34 (c) "Residence" means a single or multiple family  
35 dwelling, including, but not limited to, a single family home,  
36 apartment building, condominium, duplex, townhouse or mobile home  
37 which is used or intended to be used by its occupants as their  
38 dwelling place.

39 (2) A person commits the offense of home repair fraud when  
40 he knowingly:

41 (a) Enters into an agreement or contract, written or  
42 oral, with a person for home repair, and he knowingly:

43 (i) Misrepresents a material fact relating to the  
44 terms of the contract or agreement or the preexisting or existing  
45 condition of any portion of the property involved, or creates or  
46 confirms another's impression which is false and which he does not  
47 believe to be true, or promises performance which he does not  
48 intend to perform or knows will not be performed;

49 (ii) Uses or employs any deception, false pretense  
50 or false promises in order to induce, encourage or solicit such  
51 person to enter into any contract or agreement;

52 (iii) Misrepresents or conceals either his real  
53 name, the name of his business or his business address; or

54 (iv) Uses deception, coercion or force to obtain  
55 the victim's consent to modification of the terms of the original  
56 contract or agreement;

57 (b) Damages the property of a person with the intent to  
58 enter into an agreement or contract for home repair; or

59 (c) Misrepresents himself or another to be an employee  
60 or agent of any unit of the federal, state or municipal government

61 or any other governmental unit, or an employee or agent of any  
62 public utility, with the intent to cause a person to enter into,  
63 with himself or another, any contract or agreement for home  
64 repair.

65 (3) Intent and knowledge shall be determined by an  
66 evaluation of all circumstances surrounding a transaction and the  
67 determination shall not be limited to the time of contract or  
68 agreement.

69 (4) Substantial performance shall not include work performed  
70 in a manner of little or no value or work that fails to comply  
71 with the appropriate municipal, county, state or federal  
72 regulations or codes.

73 (5) Violation of this section shall be punished as follows:

74 (a) A first conviction under this section shall be a  
75 misdemeanor when the amount of the fraud is less than Five  
76 Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) and shall be punished by a fine not  
77 to exceed One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) or imprisonment in the  
78 county jail not to exceed six (6) months, or both.

79 (b) A second or subsequent conviction under this  
80 section shall be punished as follows:

81 (i) As a felony punishable by imprisonment in the  
82 custody of the Department of Corrections not to exceed two (2)  
83 years when the amount of the fraud is more than One Thousand  
84 Dollars (\$1,000.00) but less than Five Thousand Dollars  
85 (\$5,000.00).

86 \* \* \*

87 (ii) As a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment  
88 in the county jail for not more than six (6) months when the  
89 amount of the fraud is One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) or less.

90 (c) A first or subsequent conviction under this section  
91 shall be a felony when the amount of the fraud is over Five  
92 Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) and shall be punished as follows:

93                   (i) By imprisonment in the custody of the  
94 Department of Corrections not to exceed five (5) years or a fine  
95 not to exceed Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) or both when the  
96 amount of the fraud is Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) or more,  
97 but less than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00).

98                   (ii) By imprisonment in the custody of the  
99 Department of Corrections not to exceed ten (10) years or a fine  
100 not to exceed Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) when the amount of  
101 the fraud is Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) or more.

102           (6) In addition to any other sentence it may impose, the  
103 court shall order that the defendant shall make restitution to the  
104 victim, either within a specified period of time or in specified  
105 installments. The order shall not be enforceable during the  
106 period of imprisonment unless the court expressly finds that the  
107 defendant has assets to pay the amounts ordered at the time of  
108 sentencing. Intentional refusal to obey the restitution order or  
109 a failure by a defendant to make a good faith effort to make such  
110 restitution may be considered a violation of the defendant's  
111 probation and may be cause for revocation of his probation or  
112 suspension of sentence.

113           **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
114 and after its passage.